

## MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

### 2014 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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#### **What is the MassWorks Infrastructure Program?**

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation. The Program represents an administrative consolidation of six former grant programs:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grant
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grant
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE)
- Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will replace each of the above cited programs and the six individual programs are now discontinued.

#### **What types of activities does the program support?**

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides infrastructure grants for work including, but not limited to, sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation and improvements on publicly owned land, demolition, pedestrian walkways, and water treatment systems to support four project types:

- Multi-family housing development at a density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units)
- Economic development in weak or distressed areas
- Community revitalization to promote mixed-use development
- Transportation improvements to enhance safety in small, rural communities

#### **When will the MassWorks Infrastructure Program open a new funding round?**

The 2014 competitive funding round will open August 18<sup>th</sup> for projects that are ready to proceed as soon as weather permits during the upcoming construction season (Spring 2015). **Only those projects that are prepared to proceed to construction in the upcoming spring should apply for consideration.**

#### **Has the MassWorks Application changed?**

The 2014 MassWorks application has been updated from the 2013 application but no significant changes have been made. All of the questions from the 2013 application remain on the 2014 application.

**If I submitted an application in the 2013 MassWorks Funding round, will I need to reapply to be considered in the 2014 MassWorks funding round?**

Yes. If you wish to resubmit a project for consideration in the 2014 funding round you are required to reapply during the 2014 application period which runs from August 18<sup>th</sup> through August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**If I am resubmitting an application from the 2013 round, will I have to retype the information I submitted previously?**

No, if you submitted an application during a previous MassWorks funding round, the information has been saved to the online application system and will be available on June 1, 2014. At that time, you will be able to copy, edit and change the information that has been saved to the system. You will be required to copy the previous year's answers into a new 2014 application.

**Will I need to set up an account to submit an application through the online system?**

If you submitted an application during previous MassWorks funding rounds, your login and password for the online system have been saved and will remain the same. If you are a new user, you will be required to set up an account for the online system to be able to submit a 2014 MassWorks application.

**What communities are considered to be “small, rural communities”?**

Communities that have a population of 7,000 or less that were previously eligible for the Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP) as defined by MGL c.6C, s.47. In each year, there will be funds set aside and available only for transportation improvements to enhance safety in these communities.

**Who is eligible to apply for a MassWorks grant?**

A city or town, or other public agency with a charter that enables them to accept state grants on behalf of the municipality, and where the public agency has been designated by municipal officers to apply for grants on behalf of that city or town. Any eligible public agency acting on behalf of a municipality must submit a letter of support from the chief administrative officer of that municipality.

**Is design an eligible expense?**

Yes. Communities with a population of 7,000 or less are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant. In that case, the project must be able to complete design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

Communities with a population over 7,000 are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant however no more than 10% of the total grant request may be used for design/engineering. If a project is seeking design/engineering funds as part of an application, the project must be able to complete design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

### **Will my project be considered “ready” if it does not require design/engineering?**

Yes. Projects that are able to proceed immediately to construction are considered “ready”. There are no additional design/engineering requirements that would not otherwise be required for a municipal improvement project.

### **What are the program funding priorities?**

Priority for funding will be given to projects which support the production of multi-family housing in mixed-use districts that are well-connected to significant employment opportunities, projects that demonstrate consistency with the Patrick Administration’s sustainable development priorities and a reasonable level of readiness. Please see the MassWorks Infrastructure Program Guidelines for more details:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/guidance-documents/>

### **How will the competitive round work?**

The online 2014 Application will be available on June 1, 2014. Applications will be accepted between August 18<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup>. All applications must be electronically submitted by August 29, 2014 to be considered during the 2014 funding round. Written decisions will be rendered to all applicants eight weeks after the close of the funding round.

### **Who will review and approve the applications?**

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will consult a team of reviewers to evaluate pending applications and develop recommendations for funding. The team of reviewers includes but is not limited to the State Permit Ombudsman, the Director of Policy Development and Implementation, MassWorks Infrastructure Project Managers, MassDOT including district offices, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and other applicable interests.

In addition to the aforementioned parties, Regional Planning Agencies will also participate in the application review process and have been invited to provide feedback on applications from their region to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

Final decisions will be rendered by the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Secretary of Transportation and Administration and Finance.

## **How will I be notified if my community is awarded a MassWorks grant?**

Applicants that are approved for funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing of the approval. Approval letters may be accompanied by instructions for demonstrating readiness and any other required submissions as determined by the Secretary. Grant contracts will only be issued for projects that successfully meet all readiness requirements as outlined in the award letter or by program staff. Any project that receives an award but does not meet all requirements by the specified date will lose its funding commitment for that year and may be penalized during future funding rounds.

## **How will I be notified if my community is denied a MassWorks grant?**

Applicants that are denied funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing. If the reason for denial is a lack of available funds, that applicant may be considered at a later date that year if additional program funds become available. MassWorks Infrastructure Program staff will be available to discuss all project decisions upon request.

## **If I receive an award, how quickly can I obtain a contract?**

Applicants that are approved in a fall award round are expected to execute a contract by the following spring. If your project requires a contract more quickly than the standard timeline, you should contact a member of the MassWorks staff to discuss the required timing for the contract and expected drawdown schedule.

Beginning in the spring of 2013 all new contracts will be issued through the Intelligrants System, the same web-based application used to apply for MassWorks grants. In addition, a large majority of the MassWorks grant administrative process will be conducted utilizing Intelligrants. The new online process will include contracting, invoicing, reporting, and project closeout which will allow for advancements in efficiency and transparency.

Approved projects will be required to use the Intelligrants to submit additional information regarding the project including a detailed breakdown of the project scope, funding allocations and drawdown schedule prior to receiving a contract. The additional information is submitted through the Municipal Contract Form using the Intelligrants System and must be reviewed and approved by the MassWorks office before it is considered complete.

For more information in the contracting process and contract requirements, please see the MassWorks Contract Handbook. This handbook is subject to change and you should discuss specific provisions with your MassWorks Project Manager.

## **Do I need to submit project designs with my application?**

No. In most cases design specifications will not be required. In some cases, such as a road improvement that impacts a state-owned roadway, design specifications may be required to evaluate the project and may be requested during the application review period. Any project

which impacts a state owned roadway should consult with the MassDOT District Office about the project prior to submitting a MassWorks application.

### **Does Complete Streets apply to this program?**

Yes. Projects seeking MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants should be consistent with MassDOT's Complete Street design guidelines, which call for accommodation of all roadway users in a manner that is appropriate to the type of roadway and location. If the project impacts a state owned roadway the project design must be consistent with the Complete Street guidelines. The Complete Streets design guidelines were adopted in 2006 in the MassDOT Project Development and Design guide, and are available at:

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/DoingBusinessWithUs/ManualsPublicationsForms/ProjectDevelopmentDesignGuide.aspx>

### **What is Planning Ahead for Growth and how do I know if my community or project site falls within a Geographic District?**

Since 2007, the Patrick Administration has been deliberately and consistently planning ahead for job and housing growth across the Commonwealth in partnership with local communities. The goal of the initiative is to provide consistent support to locally desired growth and development. To determine if your project falls within a district an Online Mapping Tool is available on the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory office website under the MassWorks Infrastructure Program page: [http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map\\_ol/eohed\\_mapping.php](http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/eohed_mapping.php).

For additional information on Growth Districts, Chapter 43D and regional planning initiatives please visit the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory office website: [www.mass.gov/mpro](http://www.mass.gov/mpro).

For information on Chapter 40R districts please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/chapter-40-r.html>

### **What is a Land Use Priority Plan and how do I know if my community has participated in one?**

Land Use Priority Plans are planning efforts developed to identify priority development and preservation areas at the local, regional and state level within a designated region. The Plans are developed in partnership with municipalities, regional planning agencies, state agencies and stakeholder groups such as chambers of commerce and environmental advocacy organizations. The planning effort, led by EOHE and its partners, serves as a foundation for the Planning Ahead for Growth Strategy and is a framework for focusing public investment, technical assistance and private action.

As of Spring 2014, 5 Land Use Priority Plans have been completed or are underway. By the Fall of 2014, 123 of the Commonwealth's 351 municipalities will be included in a Land Use Priority Plan.

For more information on the Land Use Priority Plans please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/planning/>

### **What happens if my community receives a grant award but the project is not ready to proceed by the required date(s)?**

In order to ensure that the maximum benefit is realized from available grant funds, it is important that grant awards are put to use right away.

Projects put forward for consideration in the fall will be expected to complete permitting and design, secure all necessary rights of way, and obligate all other funding sources within 120 days of receipt of grant approval or immediately thereafter. Any project that receives an award but does not demonstrate readiness within a reasonable timeframe that would enable construction during the upcoming construction season, will lose its funding commitment for that year and will not be eligible to submit the project for funding consideration again until the following round. Funds committed to projects that are unable to demonstrate readiness in a reasonable timeframe will be redistributed to other projects that are ready to proceed to construction.

### **What is the “Use it or Lose it” Policy?**

There are limited funds available for statewide infrastructure projects in Massachusetts. It is imperative that all available funds are used in a timely fashion so that the maximum benefits of those investments are realized by communities in the near term. Therefore, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program places a significant emphasis on completing projects on-time and on-budget. All grant contracts will reflect a strict “use it or lose it” policy whereby communities must complete projects on-schedule and on-budget or the Commonwealth may terminate the grant. Accommodations associated with delays and cost overruns will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but only when the community can demonstrate that the delay was beyond their control and was reported immediately. Communities that complete their MassWorks Infrastructure Program projects on-time and on-budget will be recognized for doing so.

### **What happens if the project is delayed due to a state or local permit review period or utility company?**

The applicant is responsible for completing all permitting, easements, town meeting votes, bidding, utility relocation and other requirements of the project, and these details must be included in the project timeline. Grant contracts will not be issued until all actions that are not covered under the MassWorks grant scope of work and are the responsibility of the municipality have been completed.

It is recommended that projects involving state permits seek advice of the permit issuing agencies prior to submitting an application for grant funds.

If there are unforeseen delays due to state permitting, the community should bring them to the attention of the program manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately.

## **What should I do if I experience an unforeseen delay that is beyond my control?**

If there are unforeseen delays, the community should bring them to the attention of the program manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately. The grant contract will include instructions for this process.

## **Is there a set minimum or maximum grant award?**

Communities that are applying under the economic development or housing category are encouraged to submit an application for the full scope of the infrastructure project costs (including a phased approach if applicable). If the program supports the project but funding is not available to cover the full expense of the project, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program may work with the community to identify a portion of the project which can be funded through the MassWorks program.

However, communities with a population of 7,000 or less that are applying for a transportation grant to enhance safety are eligible for no more than \$1 Million in grant assistance in a three year period. Multiple communities may submit a joint application under which each community is eligible for no more than one million dollars in a three year period.

## **If there are other sources of funds that will contribute to this project, should they be identified in the application?**

Yes. Any funds that are needed to complete the project should be clearly outlined in the application. The community must demonstrate that all funds other than the MassWorks grant have been secured for the project or that they can be secured shortly after a MassWorks grant award is made.

## **Is a local or private match required?**

No. A local or private match is not required of this program however those applications requesting infrastructure funds that support a development project will be favored if a match is available.

## **Who will administer the consolidated program?**

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (ANF).

## **Where can I go for more information?**

Please visit [www.mass.gov/eohed/massworks](http://www.mass.gov/eohed/massworks) for additional information.